

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3-12 and 14-23 are pending in this application.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 3,896,641 to Worst (hereinafter "Worst"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a water supply assembly for a washing machine. Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a water supply valve assembly configured to control a supply of water to a detergent box assembly, wherein the water supply valve assembly is positioned above the detergent box assembly, and a hose configured to connect the detergent box assembly to the water supply valve assembly. Claim 1 also recites that the hose is oriented at a downward slant from the water supply valve assembly to the detergent box assembly based on a relative vertical positioning of the water supply valve assembly and the detergent box assembly. Claim 1 further recites that the detergent box assembly is provided under a top plate of the washing machine and the water supply valve assembly is provided over the top plate. Independent claim 12 recites similar features in varying scope. Worst neither discloses nor suggests at least features, or the claimed combination of features.

Worst discloses a vertical agitator type washing machine 10, including a valve assembly 54 connected to hot and cold water conduits 56 and 58 to supply clean wash water to a tub 12. Used wash water is drained from the tub 12 through a conduit 42 into a recirculating pump 40 and through a conduit 44, where it is forced up to a fluidic switch 48. A filter-dispenser 70 positioned at the top of the tub 12 has three chambers 74, 76 and 78 which each hold a wash

agent. Recirculated water from the conduit 44 is introduced into an appropriate one of the chambers 74, 76, 78 through a corresponding conduit 86, 88, 90, respectively, thereby flushing the wash agent into the basket 14.

The recirculating pump 40 and conduit 44 (compared in the Office Action to the recited water supply valve assembly) are clearly positioned well below the filter-dispenser 70 (compared in the Office Action to the recited detergent box assembly). Worst neither discloses nor suggests a water supply valve assembly positioned above a detergent box assembly, nor a detergent box assembly provided under a top plate and a water supply valve assembly provided over the top plate, as recited in independent claims 1 and 12.

Further, if instead the valve assembly 54 which provides clean water to the washing machine 10 were compared to the water supply valve assembly recited in independent claims 1 and 12, Worst still fails to disclose or suggest the recited water supply valve assembly. That is, the valve assembly 54 is clearly positioned below the filter-dispenser 70, and is in no way connected thereto.

Thus, Worst neither discloses nor suggests a water supply valve assembly positioned above a detergent box assembly, let alone a hose configured to connect these elements, as recited in independent claims 1 and 12, nor that the detergent box assembly and the water valve assembly are respectively provided under and over a top plate, as recited in independent claims 1 and 12.

Additionally, the Office Action asserts that Figure 2 of Worst shows the conduits 86, 88 and 90 to be at an angled position leading into the chambers 74, 76 and 78, respectively.

Reply to Office Action of November 6, 2006

However, as clearly shown in the front sectional view provided in Figures 1 and 4 of Worst, the conduits 86, 88 and 90 extend upward from the fluidic switch 48 and through a 90 degree bend leading substantially horizontally into the respective chambers 74, 76, 78. The perceived slant in Figure 2 of Worst is merely due to its perspective orientation. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that neither the conduit 44 nor the conduits 86, 88, 90 are positioned at a slant, as is the hose recited in independent claims 1 and 12.

The Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Worst's washing machine 10 such that the water supply valve assembly (the disclosed pump 40 and conduit 44) would be positioned above the detergent box (the disclosed filter-dispenser 70). The Office Action further asserts that such a modification would not require a complete redesign of the water supply, flow and drain scheme as disclosed by Worst, or destroy the machine's functionality as originally intended. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

More specifically, such a modification would require that the recirculation pump 40 and conduit 44 be moved to a position above the tub 12 in order for these water supply elements to be positioned above the filter-dispenser 70. The pump 40 and conduit 44 are a part of the drain system, and must be positioned at the bottom of the tub 12 to ensure that the used wash water is drained from the tub 12, as these components rely at least partially on gravity to direct water to be drained in the correct direction. Further, a pump 40 as disclosed in Worst would probably be inoperative if it were moved to a position above the tub because water being supplied to the pump must be supplied with a certain positive pressure for the pump to be operative. Moving these components as suggested in the Office Action would not improve the flow of wash water,

Reply to Office Action of **November 6, 2006**

as asserted in the Office Action. Rather, such a modification would likely result in the need for additional pumps and valves to direct water up and out of the tub 12 for draining and recirculation, likely inhibiting, rather than improving, the flow of wash water, and significantly complicating the structure and cost of the washing machine as originally disclosed by Worst.

Additionally, even if such a modification were feasible, this would require that the conduit 55 pass through the top of the cabinet 20, and that the fluidic switch 48 be positioned above the top of the cabinet 20. However, Worst neither discloses nor suggests any openings in the top of the cabinet 20 through which the conduit may pass, nor any structure above the top of the cabinet 20 which could support the upper portion of the conduit 44 and the fluidic switch 48.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 12 are not anticipated or obvious over Worst, and thus the rejection of independent claims 1 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Worst should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 3 and 14 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 12, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

The Office Action also rejects claims 4-11 and 15-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Worst, in view of Hobbs (U.S. Patent No. 6,125,881). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 4-11 and 15-23 depend, respectively, from independent claims 1 and 12. As discussed above, Worst fails to disclose or suggest all of the features 1 and 12. The Hobbs reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Worst. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 4-11 and 15-23 are also allowable over Worst and Hobbs for all of the reasons discussed

Reply to Office Action of November 6, 2006

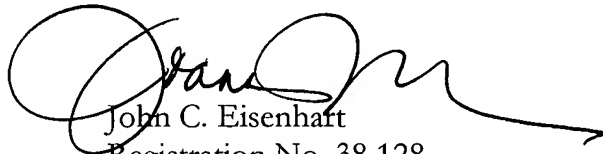
above in connection with claims 1 and 12. Withdrawal of the rejection of these claims is also respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, JOANNA K. MASON, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
FLESHNER & KIM, LLP



John C. Eisenhart
Registration No. 38,128
Joanna K. Mason
Registration No. 56,408

P.O. Box 221200
Chantilly, Virginia 20153-1200
703 766-3701 JCE/JKM/lhd

Date: January 5, 2007

Q:\Documents\2016-671\111997

Please direct all correspondence to Customer Number 34610